

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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SUBJECT: REPORT ON AIDSAT DEMONSTRATION - OCTOBER 13, 1976

1. THE DEMONSTRATION

THE AIDSAT DEMONSTRATION WAS SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT AS SCHEDULED. THE ENTIRE GOU CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP HEADED BY PRESIDENT MENDEZ WITNESSED THE SHOW AT THE HOTEL CARRASCO. IN ADDITION TO PRESIDENT AND MRS. MENDEZ, THE 450 INVITED GUESTS INCLUDED THE COMMANDERS IN CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, THE CABINET, PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND THE SUPREME COURT, SUB-CABINET OFFICERS AND HEADS OF AUTONOMOUS AGENCIES, INTENDENTE OF MONTEVIDEO AND OTHER MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND LEADERS OF PRIVATE SECTOR, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA OFFICIALS. ANOTHER 270 MILITARY, GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS AND LEADERS OF THE UNIVERSITY, SCIENTIFIC AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY WATCHED THE PRESENTATION AT ROT SITES LOCATED AT NAVAL TRAINING SCHOOL AND PARQUE HOTEL. THE TELECAST WAS CARRIED ON A NATIONAL TV HOOKUP IN BLACK AND WHITE, WHICH WAS VIEWED BY SOME ONE MILLION URUGUAYANS

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THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. AFTER THE TELECAST AT THE HOTEL CARRASCO, THE GUESTS WERE INVITED TO PARTAKE OF A CHAMPAGNE TOAST WHILE PRESIDENT MENDEZ AND SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS VISITED THE TV STUDIO SET UP BY NASA TECHNICIANS IN A

NEARBY SALON.

2. AID/NASA SEMINAR

ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 14, USAID, IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH USIS, SPONSORED A 2 1/2 HOUR SEMINAR AT HOTEL CARRASCO ON THE COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF NEW SPACE TECHNOLOGY, IN WHICH ABOUT 100 URUGUAYAN TECHNICIANS PARTICIPATED. THE AID/NASA PANEL INCLUDED NEALE WALSCH, AIDSAT PRODUCER; PETER BOYNTON, EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST, DAVID NACE, NASA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR; AND DR. JERALD COOK, REMOTE SENSING EXPERT.

3. REACTION TO AIDSAT DEMONSTRATION

THE URUGUAYAN OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC REACTION WAS OVERWHELMINGLY FAVORABLE. OVER TWO MONTHS AGO, THE GOU AND THE MILITARY COMMANDERS HAD DECLARED THE AIDSAT DEMONSTRATION TO BE "IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST", AND THEREAFTER THROUGH THE DETAILED PLANNING AND PREPARATION STAGES, THE GOU COOPERATION AND SUPPORT WAS "ALL OUT" AND EFFECTIVE. THE ATTENDANCE OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE KEY GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS AT THE HOTEL CARRASCO WAS IMPRESSIVE TESTIMONY OF OFFICIAL INTEREST AND SUPPORT.

THE REACTION TO THE TELECAST OF THE GOU AND MILITARY LEADERS, AS GATHERED FROM COMMENTS MADE TO EMBASSY OFFICERS, WAS CHARACTERIZED BY GREAT INTEREST, ENTHUSIASM AND ADMIRATION FOR U.S. TECHNOLOGICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE U.S. INTEREST IN SHARING THIS TECHNOLOGY WITH OTHER NATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF AIDSAT PLANNING AND THE ACTUAL TELECAST WAS EXTENSIVE, DETAILED AND HIGHLY FAVORABLE. DURING THE PLANNING PERIOD, THREE PRESS CONFERENCES WERE HELD BY THE JOINT GOU-AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE, TO EXPLAIN THE PURPOSES OF THE AIDSAT DEMONSTRATION AND THE PROPOSED PROGRAM. FROM THE ARRIVAL OF THE AID/NASA TEAM ON OCTOBER 10, THERE WAS A BUILDUP IN MEDIA COVERAGE.
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AGE, CULMINATING IN FRONT-PAGE HEADLINES AND ARTICLES THE DAY AFTER THE TELECAST. A FOLDER OF AIDSAT PRESS CLIPPINGS WILL BE POUCHED SEPARATELY. FOR FURTHER INFO ON MEDIA COVERAGE AND USIS SUPPORT OF THE AIDSAT DEMONSTRATION, SEE MONTEVIDEO 3894.

4. FAVORABLE POLITICAL EFFECTS

THE TIMING OF THE AIDSAT TELECAST COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A MORE OPPORTUNE MOMENT FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH URUGUAY. THE STRONG OFFICIAL AND PRESS REACTION TO PASSAGE OF THE KOCH AND HARKING AMENDMENTS, REPORTED EXTENSIVELY BY THIS EMBASSY, HAS SERVED TO CONFUSE THE URUGUAYAN PUBLIC AS TO THE REASONS FOR THE PRESENT STRAINS AND FUTURE OF OUR BILATERAL

RELATIONS. THUS, EVEN WHILE GOU OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA CONTINUE TO CRITICIZE THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, THE FACT THAT THE ENTIRE GOVERNMENT, HEADED BY THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDERS IN CHIEF, ATTENDED THE AIDSAT DEMO AND PUT THE SHOW ON A NATIONAL TV HOOKUP, ALL TENDED TO DRAMATICALLY DEMONSTRATE TO THE URUGUAYAN PUBLIC THE CONTINUING FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES.

AS SUCH, THE AIDSAT DEMO MADE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS DURING THESE DIFFICULT DAYS, BY DEMONSTRATING OUR CONTINUING COLLABORATION IN AREAS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND, ABOVE ALL, BY FOCUSING ON THE MORE ENDURING, LONGER-TERM BASES OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

5. PROGRAM AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

WHILE THE PROGRAMATIC AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE DEMONSTRATION WERE, ON THE WHOLE, OUTSTANDING, CERTAIN CRITICAL COMMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY SOME URUGUAYANS WHICH MERIT ATTENTION IN FUTURE AIDSAT PROGRAMMING.

A. THE FILM PORTION OF THE PHASE I PROGRAM WAS TOO LONG AND CAUSED SOME LOSS OF AUDIENCE ATTENTION BY THE TIME PHASE II BEGAN.

B. THE GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS OF THE FILMS WAS EXCESSIVELY ORIENTED TOWARD THE LEAST-DEVELOPED AREAS OF AFRICA AND ASIA, WHERE THE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT ARE GENERALLY FAR BEHIND THOSE EXISTING FOR THE MOST PART IN LATIN AMERICA AND PARTICULARLY IN UNCLASSIFIED

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URUGUAY, WHICH IS A MIDDLE INCOME, CULTURALLY AND SOCIALLY ADVANCED COUNTRY, WHICH, HOWEVER, HAS CERTAIN BASIC DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS. THUS, SOME CRITICISMS WERE HEARD THAT MANY OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS DEPICTED IN THE FILM AND THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES RELATED TO THEIR SOLUTION HAVE LITTLE OR NO APPLICATION TO THE REALITIES OF URUGUAY. ALSO, THERE WERE SOME COMMENTS THAT THE U.S. TENDS TO STEREOTYPE ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN A STANDARD FOCUS REFLECTING THE POOREST MAJORITIES OF AFRICA OR ASIA AND FAILS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EVOLUTION.

C. THERE WERE SOUND PROBLEMS DURING THE SIMULATION TEST WITH TRANSLATION OF PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE. THE ENGLISH VOICE AND SPANISH TRANSLATION THEREOF WERE BOTH AT THE SAME SOUND LEVEL WHICH PRODUCED A GARBLE. DURING THE ACTUAL TELECAST, THE SPANISH SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION OF PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE AND PHASE III PANEL CAME THROUGH IN A RASPY TONE DIFFICULT TO HEAR AND UNDERSTAND.

6. GOU AUTHORITIES HAVE INDICATED THEIR INTENTION TO CAREFULLY EVALUATE THE RESULTS OF THE AIDSAT DEMONSTRATION AND TO CONSIDER POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION IN APPLYING THESE

TECHNOLOGIES TO THE URUGUAYAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

7. THIS MISSION WISHES TO COMPLIMENT AID AND NASA FOR SENDING AN OUTSTANDING TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS TO CARRY OUT THE PROGRAMMATIC AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE DEMONSTRATION. ALSO, WE APPRECIATED ALL THE EXCELLENT SUPPORT AND SERVICE OF AA/IDC, PARTICULARLY MR. JOHN WILHELM AND HIS STAFF, DURING THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION STAGES OF THE DEMONSTRATION. FINALLY, OUR GRATITUDE TO MR. EUGENE GIRARD, AA/LA, AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE U.S. PANEL WHOSE HANDLING OF THE URUGUAYAN PANEL'S QUESTIONS HELPED MAKE THIS PHASE OF THE PRESENTATION THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE PRESENTATION.
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